

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An internally threaded fastener assembly comprising:
a stemmed washer having a washer portion with an abutment surface adapted to abut a surface of a material, a standoff portion integral with the washer portion and configured to extend substantially through the material of a defined thickness and substantially limit compressive loading on a the material, and a retaining portion integral with the washer portion; and
an internally threaded fastener disposed adjacent to the washer portion and retained rotatably within assembly with the stemmed washer by the retaining portion.
2. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the fastener includes a peripheral flange and the retaining portion extends radially inwardly to capture the peripheral flange and thereby to retain the fastener in the assembly.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the standoff portion forms a hollow right cylinder.
5. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the washer portion is generally planar.
6. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the fastener is a threaded nut having flats extending from the stemmed washer.

7. (Currently Amended) An internally threaded fastener assembly comprising:
a threaded nut having a lower peripheral flange; and
a base having a washer portion having a material abutment surface, a standoff portion extending from the washer portion, and a retaining skirt portion extending integrally from the washer portion and capturing the peripheral flange of the threaded nut to retain the threaded nut rotatably in assembly with the base, wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit displacement of a threaded fastener securable to the threaded nut relative to the washer portion.

8. (Original) The assembly of claim 7, wherein the nut includes flats extending from the retain skirt portion.

9. (Original) The assembly of claim 7, wherein the standoff portion, the washer portion and the retaining skirt portion form a single-piece structure.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) The assembly of claim 7, wherein the washer portion is generally planar.

12. (Original) The assembly of claim 7, wherein the standoff portion forms a hollow right cylinder.

13. (Currently Amended) An internally threaded fastener assembly comprising:
an internally threaded fastener adapted to engage an externally threaded fastener;
and

a base having a washer portion with an abutment surface adapted to abut an outer surface of a material, a standoff portion adapted to extend from the washer portion such that the standoff portion extends substantially through the material of a defined thickness to limit displacement of the externally threaded fastener relative to the washer portion, and a retaining skirt portion extending integrally from the washer portion and capturing the fastener rotatably in assembly with the base.

14. (Original) The assembly of claim 13, wherein the fastener includes a peripheral flange extending radially therefrom, and wherein the skirt portion captures the peripheral flange to retain the fastener in assembly with the base.

15-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A fastener kit comprising:

a stemmed washer having a washer portion with an abutment surface adapted to abut a material, a standoff portion integral with the washer portion, and a retaining portion integral with the washer portion;

an internally threaded fastener disposed adjacent to the washer portion and retained rotatably within assembly with the stemmed washer by the retaining portion; and

an externally threaded fastener which mates with the internally threaded fastener,

wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit relative displacement of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer to minimize compression of a the material disposed therebetween.

27. (Currently Amended) A fastened joint comprising:

a stemmed washer having a washer portion adapted to abut a compressible substrate, a standoff portion integral with the washer portion, and a retaining portion integral with the washer portion;

an internally threaded fastener disposed adjacent to the washer portion and retained rotatably within assembly with the stemmed washer by the retaining portion;

an externally threaded fastener which mates with the internally threaded fastener, the externally threaded fastener including a head; and

a the compressible substrate joined between the standoff portion and the head of the externally threaded fastener, wherein the standoff portion is adapted to limit compression of the substrate between the head of the externally threaded fastener and the washer portion of the stemmed washer.